

*This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in Journal of  
Medieval History on 30 September 2015, available online:*

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/03044181.2015.1089311>

**Reconsidering Donizone's *Vita Mathildis*:  
Boniface of Canossa and Emperor Henry II**

Robert Houghton\*

*Department of History, Medecroft Building, King Alfred Campus, Sparkford Road,  
Winchester, SO22 4NR, United Kingdom*

*(Received 6 March 2014; final version received 5 November 2014)*

Boniface of Canossa is a figure of great importance to the political and military history of eleventh-century Italy. Modern historiography has almost universally argued that Boniface gained his power through a close relationship and alliance with a series of German emperors. Most accounts see Boniface's fall and eventual murder in 1052 as a direct consequence of the breakdown of this relationship.

This analysis is flawed, however, as it rests predominantly on the evidence of a single source: the *Vita Mathildis* by Donizone of Canossa. This document was produced more than half a century after the death of Boniface by an author who held complex political goals, but these have not been fully considered in the discussion of Boniface. Through the examination of the charter sources, this article argues that Donizone misrepresented Boniface's actions and that there is considerable evidence that Boniface was not a consistent ally of the German emperors.

**Keywords:** Italy; diplomatic; authority; power; relationship networks; Donizone of Canossa; Boniface of Canossa; Holy Roman Empire

Boniface of Canossa (c.985–1052) was one of the most influential figures in northern and central Italy in the early eleventh century, controlling extensive lands and rights in the counties of Mantua, Reggio, Modena, Parma, Bergamo, Brescia, Verona, Ferrara and Bologna, and in the duchy of Tuscany.<sup>1</sup> Canossa itself dominated the important pass between Reggio and Tuscany. The rise of Canossa is typically portrayed as the result of a close relationship of three generations of the family with the German emperors.<sup>2</sup> The appearance of Adalbert Atto, Boniface's grandfather, as count of Reggio and Modena in 962 and as count of Mantua in 977 is credited to his support for Otto I against Berengar II.<sup>3</sup> The growth of the family's lands under Tedald has been connected to his support for Henry II against Arduin of Ivrea in 1002 to 1004.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, Boniface's appearance as duke of Tuscany from 16 March 1032 has been presented as a reward for his support of Conrad II against Ulric Manfred of Turin and Rainier of Tuscany, who rebelled against Conrad's authority in Italy in favour of the French king Robert II, and then the Duke of Aquitaine, William V.<sup>5</sup> The alliance between Canossa and the German emperors is

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\* E-mail: Robert.Houghton@winchester.ac.uk

<sup>1</sup> Giuseppe Sergi, 'I poteri dei Canossa: Poteri delegati, poteri feudali, poteri signorili', in *I Poteri dei Canossa, da Reggio Emilia all'Europa: atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Reggio Emilia-Carpinetti, 29-31 ottobre 1992)*, ed. Paolo Golinelli, *Il mondo medievale* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1994), 29–39; Arnaldo Tincani, 'Le corti dei Canossa in area Padan', in *I Poteri dei Canossa, da Reggio Emilia all'Europa: atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Reggio Emilia-Carpinetti, 29-31 ottobre 1992)*, ed. Paolo Golinelli, *Il mondo medievale* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1994), 253–78; Harald Zimmermann, 'I Signori di Canossa e l'Impero (da Ottone I a Enrico III)', in *I Poteri dei Canossa, da Reggio Emilia all'Europa: atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Reggio Emilia-Carpinetti, 29-31 ottobre 1992)*, ed. Paolo Golinelli, *Il mondo medievale* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1994), 413–19; Paolo Golinelli, 'L'Italia dopo la lotta per le investiture: la questione dell'eredità matildica', *Studi Medievali*, 3, 42, no. 2 (2001): 511.

<sup>2</sup> Paolo Golinelli, *Matilde e i Canossa nel cuore del medioevo* (Milano: Camunia, 1991), 17–22; Sergi, 'I poteri dei Canossa', 29–39; Golinelli, 'L'Italia', 510–11.

<sup>3</sup> Zimmermann, 'I Signori di Canossa', 414.

<sup>4</sup> Margherita Giuliana Bertolini, 'Bonifacio, marchese e duca di Toscana', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 12, ed. Alberto Maria Ghisalberti (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1971), 97.

<sup>5</sup> Reinhold Schumann, *Authority and the Commune, Parma 833–1133* (Parma: Presso la deputazione di storia patria per le province parmensi, 1973), 145; Hans Hubert Anton, 'Bonifaz von Canossa, Markgraf von Tuszien, und die Italienpolitik der frühen Salier', *Historische Zeitschrift* 24 (1972): 534–5; Margherita

argued to have persisted until the first Italian expedition of Henry III in 1046 when mutual suspicion between Boniface and Henry III led to a souring of this rapport and rising political tensions culminating in rebellious activity by Boniface.<sup>6</sup> After this point the relationship between Boniface's successors and the Emperor Henry IV (1056–1105) often degenerated into conflict within the broader struggle of the Investiture Contest. Nevertheless, until 1046 the Canossans are normally presented as stalwartly loyal imperial vassals.

This perception of the Canossans as strong supporters of the emperors is based primarily on reports of the family presented by a handful of narrative sources, most notably Donizone's *Vita Mathildis*, the biographical polemic of Boniface's daughter Matilda of Canossa (1076–1115) completed around 1115.<sup>7</sup> This is largely a result of the limited quantity of material detailing the earlier Canossan dynasty. The charter record has been consulted, but is mainly used to elaborate on the broad descriptions provided by Donizone. Donizone, a monk at Sant'Apollonio in Canossa, had specific political and rhetorical goals, relevant to the world of 1115, which dictated his presentation of the events of the early eleventh century. Likewise, the authors of the other narrative sources which mention the Canossans, such as Arnulf of Milan, had their own aims in a world chronologically removed from that of Boniface and his predecessors. This has led to some misconceptions about Boniface and his relationship with the imperial court. Riversi

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Giuliana Bertolini, 'Note di genealogia e di storia canossiana', in *I ceti dirigenti in Toscana nell'età precomunale, Atti del 1° Convegno di studi sulla storia dei ceti dirigenti in Toscana, Firenze 2 dicembre 1978* (Pisa: Pacini Editore, 1981), 118–19; Golinelli, 'L'Italia', 511.

<sup>6</sup> Harry Bresslau, *Jahrbücher des deutschen Reiches unter Kaiser Konrad II.* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967); Bertolini, 'Bonifacio, marchese e duca di Toscana', 105–7; Vito Fumagalli, *Le origini di una grande dinastia feudale Adalberto-Atto di Canossa.* (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1971); Zimmermann, 'I Signori di Canossa', 416–417; Stefan Weinfurter, *The Salian Century: Main Currents in an Age of Transition*, Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 106; Golinelli, 'L'Italia', 512.

<sup>7</sup> Donizone, *Vita Mathildis*, eds. Paolo Golinelli and Vito Fumagalli. Biblioteca di cultura medievale 823 (Milano: Jaca Book, 2008).

has observed these trends and the importance of viewing Donizone and his account of the Canossans in the context of the narrative sources of his time.<sup>8</sup> This paper expands Riversi's argument and underlines the need to consider the charter record more thoroughly when reading the *Vita Mathildis*.

A number of historians has questioned whether the relationship between the emperors and the Canossans was entirely without conflict before 1046. As early as 1933 Gualazzini suggested that an anti-Canossan party existed in the imperial court and held some influence over the emperor from the start of the 1040s.<sup>9</sup> In 1972 Anton went further arguing that although Boniface of Canossa enjoyed generally cordial relations with the emperors Conrad II (1024–39) and Henry III (1039–56), there are several incidents that suggest that this relationship was more complex than is typically accepted both before and after its apparent breakdown in the middle of the 1040s.<sup>10</sup> For example, Anton questioned Boniface's support for Conrad II during the conflict following the death of his predecessor, Henry II, observing that there was very little evidence for this alliance beyond Donizone's work.<sup>11</sup> There is a lot of merit to Anton's argument and, as this paper will demonstrate, it is possible, through the examination of the charter sources, to observe nuances in the relationship between Boniface and the Emperor Henry II (1002–24). This did not equate to the open conflict of the second half of the century, nor does it represent constant animosity between Boniface and these emperors, but it is evident that the relationship was not as consistently friendly as modern authors suggest.

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<sup>8</sup> Eugenio Riversi, *La memoria di Canossa: saggi di contestualizzazione della Vita Mathildis di Donizone*. Studi medioevali, new series 2 (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2013), 69–76.

<sup>9</sup> U. Gualazzini, 'Per la storia dei rapporti tra Enrico III e Bonifacio di Canossa', *Archivio Storico Lombardo* 19 (1933): 78.

<sup>10</sup> Anton, 'Bonifaz von Canossa', 556.

<sup>11</sup> Anton, 'Bonifaz von Canossa', 535.

This paper therefore first discusses Donizone's motivations in composing the *Vita Mathildis* and the consequences for his portrayal of the house of Canossa. Then, through the use of the charter sources of the second Italian expedition of Henry II (1013–14), it argues that Boniface's relationship with the German emperors was more nuanced than is typically allowed.

### **Boniface in Donizone's *Vita Mathildis***

Donizone's poem, the *Vita Mathildis*, is the most detailed source for the life of Boniface of Canossa. The poem describes the history of the house of Canossa from the construction of the fortress at Canossa in the first half of the tenth century to the death of Matilda, the last of her dynasty, in 1115. Although the commonly used title of the work, *Vita Mathildis*, refers only to Matilda, the work is split into two equally sized books, one of which is devoted to her ancestors.<sup>12</sup> Donizone's title, *De principibus Canusinis*, underlines his intent to chronicle the history of the entire Canossan dynasty.<sup>13</sup>

Donizone was born around 1070, probably somewhere in the Canossan lands.<sup>14</sup> He entered the Benedictine monastery of Sant'Apollonio in 1086 or 1087 and is named as abbot of the institution by 1136 in a bull of Innocent II.<sup>15</sup> The *Vita Mathildis* was written between 1111 (the date of the dedicatory letter) and 1115 (the date of the last event

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<sup>12</sup> Paolo Golinelli, 'Donizone', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 41, ed. Alberto Maria Ghisalberti (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1992), 201; Riversi, *La memoria di Canossa*, 61.

<sup>13</sup> Paolo Golinelli, 'Donizone e il suo poema per Matilde', in *Vita di Matilde di Canossa*, eds. Golinelli and Fumagalli, xi; Riversi, *La memoria di Canossa*, 62.

<sup>14</sup> Golinelli, 'Donizone', 200–1; Golinelli, 'Donizone e il suo poema per Matilde', ix.

<sup>15</sup> Lino Lionello Ghirardini, *La voce immortale di Canossa: studio critico sul celebre monaco poeta Donizone*. Deputazione di storia patria per le antiche provincie Modenesi. Biblioteca, new series, 99 (Modena: Aedes Muratoriana, 1987); Golinelli, 'Donizone', 200–1; Golinelli, 'Donizone e il suo poema per Matilde', ix.

described in the text).<sup>16</sup> A pair of additions, a eulogy for Matilda (*De insigni obitu memorandae Comitissae Mathildis*) and an appeal to the emperor, Henry V (*Exhortatio Canusii de adventu imperatoris*), are attached, both produced in 1116.<sup>17</sup> The work consists of 2,934 verses writing almost exclusively in leonine hexameters and survives in its original form in the Vatican Library as *Vatican Latino 4922*.<sup>18</sup>

Although only a handful of medieval copies of Donizone's work survive, the poem was distributed extensively through the network of Canossan monasteries in Italy, and formed the basis for several local variants and pro-Gregorian accounts of the period.<sup>19</sup> Donizone's skill as an author, his political leanings and his access to a wide distribution network ensured that the *Vita* enjoyed a broad audience within the supporters of the Gregorian reform movement.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, this widespread distribution has meant that his work greatly influenced later medieval and, subsequently, modern depictions of the Canossans.<sup>21</sup>

However, the *Vita* contains very little biographical material on Matilda or her court which suggests that Donizone had little contact with her.<sup>22</sup> For example, Donizone

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<sup>16</sup> Schumann, *Authority and the Commune*, 323; I.S. Robinson, 'The Metrical Commentary on Genesis of Donizo of Canossa: Bible and Gregorian Reform', *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale* 41 (1974): 8; Golinelli, 'Donizone', 201; Pierpaolo Bonacini, 'Sulle strade dei Canossa dal parmense tutto intorno', in *Studi Matildici IV Atti e Memorie del Convegno Il territorio parmense da Carlo Magno ai Canossa*, ed. P. Bonacini (Modena: Aedes Muratoriana, 1997), 11; Golinelli, 'Donizone e il suo poema per Matilde', xi; Riversi, *La memoria di Canossa*, 61.

<sup>17</sup> Golinelli, 'Donizone e il suo poema per Matilde', xi; Riversi, *La memoria di Canossa*, 62–3.

<sup>18</sup> Golinelli, 'Donizone e il suo poema per Matilde', xv; Jan M. Ziolkowski, 'Donizo', ed. Jan M. Ziolkowski and Michael C. J. Putnam, *The Virgilian Tradition: The First Fifteen Hundred Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Riversi, *La memoria di Canossa*, 60.

<sup>19</sup> Robinson, 'Metrical Commentary', 7; Bonacini, 'Sulle strade dei Canossa', 11; Golinelli, 'Donizone e il suo poema per Matilde', xv–xvii.

<sup>20</sup> Gina Fasoli, 'Note sulla feudalità canossiana', *Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Antiche Provincie Modenesi. Atti e memorie*, 9, no. 3 (1963): 15.

<sup>21</sup> Golinelli, 'Donizone e il suo poema per Matilde', xviii.

<sup>22</sup> Robinson, 'Metrical Commentary', 8; Riversi, *La memoria di Canossa*, 450.

gives no explicit indication of where Matilda was born.<sup>23</sup> More generally, Donizone was often reliant on the accounts of others for information about the events he described.<sup>24</sup> Donizone made use of the works of his contemporaries and near contemporaries, such as Bonizone's *Liber ad amicum*, the *Vita Anselmi Lucensis*, and the poems, letters and other works of Bishop Ranger of Lucca, John of Mantua and Anselm of Lucca for much of his information.<sup>25</sup> Donizone's praise of Ranger suggests that the bishop was a particular influence.<sup>26</sup> In a few sections of the *Vita*, Donizone abandoned his otherwise rigorous adherence to his Leonine metre to cite other writers verbatim: Golinelli, writing in 2008, highlights two lost sources praising Boniface of Canossa<sup>27</sup> and detailing the death of Guibert of Ravenna (the antipope Clement III).<sup>28</sup> Golinelli suggests that Donizone also occasionally drew on charter materials held in Canossa including the documents of Matilda's family and the papal register of Gregory VII.<sup>29</sup>

Beyond these contemporary sources, Donizone had access to several earlier medieval writers including Isidore of Seville, Gregory of Tours and Paul the Deacon.<sup>30</sup> He also had an extensive knowledge of sacred texts and classical authors, particularly

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<sup>23</sup> Maria Bertolani del Rio, 'Dove nacque la contessa Matilde?', in *Studi matildici: atti e memorie del Convegno di studi matildici (Modena e Reggio Emilia 19, 20, 21 ottobre 1963)* (Modena: Deputazione di storia patria per le antiche provincie modenesi, 1964), 12.

<sup>24</sup> Schumann, *Authority and the Commune*, 324.

<sup>25</sup> Golinelli, 'Donizone', 201; Golinelli, 'Donizone e il suo poema per Matilde', xii; Riversi, *La memoria di Canossa*, 64–8.

<sup>26</sup> Donizone, *Vita Mathildis*, 2008, bk. 2. ll.385–438; Golinelli, 'Donizone', 201; Golinelli, 'Donizone e il suo poema per Matilde', ix.

<sup>27</sup> Donizone, *Vita di Matilde di Canossa*, ed. Paolo Golinelli and Vito Fumagalli (Milano: Jaca Book, 2008), bk. 1. ll.749–94.

<sup>28</sup> Donizone, *Vita Mathildis*, 2008, bk. 2. 905–16 ; Golinelli, 'Donizone', 201; Golinelli, 'Donizone e il suo poema per Matilde', ix–xi.

<sup>29</sup> Golinelli, 'Donizone', 201; Golinelli, 'Donizone e il suo poema per Matilde', ix.

<sup>30</sup> Giuseppe Vecchi, 'Temi e momenti di scuola nella "Vita Mathildis" di Donizone', *Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Antiche Provincie Modenesi. Atti e Memorie*, 9, number 3 (1963): 364; Golinelli, 'Donizone', 201; Golinelli, 'Donizone e il suo poema per Matilde', ix.



Virgil.<sup>31</sup> These earlier texts certainly influenced the style Donizone used to glorify Matilda and her family.<sup>32</sup> The Canossans were cast in the role of a classical royal dynasty and this ideology led Donizone to omit several key events from his narrative.<sup>33</sup> More generally, Donizone used his knowledge of classical works to construct what Riversi identifies as a *programma di veritá*: Donizone knowingly merged fiction and history to further his narrative.<sup>34</sup>

Donizone had a strong personal agenda. His central goal was to persuade Matilda to designate Sant'Apollonio as the final resting place for herself and her family.<sup>35</sup> An auxiliary, but nevertheless important, ambition was to secure the support or at least goodwill of the Emperor Henry V who had reached a detente with Matilda in 1111 and, as her designated heir, was a potential protector and benefactor of the monastery after her death in 1115.<sup>36</sup> To achieve these goals, Donizone sought to aggrandise Matilda and her family and to secure her political position. His portrayal of the virtues of his monastery and his attempts to fortify its position were a corollary of this broader project.<sup>37</sup> These aims led to the emergence of a number of themes within his work, of which three are particularly apparent: the presentation of Matilda in a laudatory manner; the justification of her control of her lands; and the condemnation of the failures of her enemy the

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<sup>31</sup> Golinelli, 'Donizone', 201; Golinelli, 'Donizone e il suo poema per Matilde', ix; Robert Houghton, 'Donizo', in *The Virgil Encyclopedia*, eds. Richard F. Thomas and Jan M. Ziolkowski (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2013); Riversi, *La memoria di Canossa*, 251–9.

<sup>32</sup> L. Simeoni, 'La "Vita Mathildis" e il suo valore storico', *Atti e Memorie, Regia Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Province Modenesi* 4 (1927): 24–5; Vecchi, 'Temi e momenti', 364; Houghton, 'Donizo'; Riversi, *La memoria di Canossa*, 262.

<sup>33</sup> Golinelli, 'Donizone', 201–2.

<sup>34</sup> Riversi, *La memoria di Canossa*, 260–4.

<sup>35</sup> Golinelli, 'Donizone', 201; Golinelli, 'Donizone e il suo poema per Matilde', x; Riversi, *La memoria di Canossa*, 194–7.

<sup>36</sup> Paolo Golinelli, 'Matilda ed Enrico V', in *I Poteri dei Canossa, da Reggio Emilia all'Europa: atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Reggio Emilia-Carpinetti, 29-31 ottobre 1992)*, ed. Paolo Golinelli, *Il mondo medievale* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1994), 469–71; Golinelli, 'L'Italia', 517–9; Riversi, *La memoria di Canossa*, 61, 264, 448.

<sup>37</sup> Riversi, *La memoria di Canossa*, 383–444.

emperor, Henry IV, while presenting Matilda and her family in a regal or, at a few points in his work, an imperial role.<sup>38</sup> Donizone pressed these themes throughout his account of Matilda's life and that of her family.

Firstly, Donizone's most basic goal was the presentation of Matilda as a paragon of virtue. The poet states as much in the opening section of his work where he comments that if Plato were still alive and Maro (Virgil) himself, these times would compel them to compose countless verses about our dukes (the Canossans):

Vivus si Plato foret hactenus ipseque Maro,  
Innumeros versus darret illis fingere tempus  
Istud, de nostris ducibus.<sup>39</sup>

Donizone repeatedly uses positive adjectives to refer to his patron: she is variously described as 'famed, respected and bold' [please add translation] ('fama, nobilis et fortis') and 'skilled' ('prudens').<sup>40</sup> Moreover, Donizone intended to praise the entire Canossan family. Boniface is portrayed as the most important and powerful figure in Italy. Having described the rising of the *cives* against Conrad in 1037, Donizone describes how the emperor entrusted his rescue to the skilled lord Boniface who was pleased to break the foolish city:

[Cesar] Mandat hero nostro Bonefacio bene docto,  
Quatinus accurat, iuuet urbem frangere stultam.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Golinelli, 'Donizone', 201; Eugenio Riversi, 'Note sulla rappresentazione del lignaggio dei Canossa nella "Vita Mathildis" di Donizone', *Geschichte und Region / Storia e Regione* 11, number 2 (2002): 101–33; Golinelli, 'Donizone e il suo poema per Matilde', xii.

<sup>39</sup> Donizone, *Vita Mathildis*, 2008, bk. 1, ll. 63–4.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., bk. 2, ll. 29, 459, 572.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., bk. 1, ll. 854–7.

Donizone devotes a chapter to underline Boniface's achievement of greatness in the religious sphere:

Actibus ut mundi Bonifacius iste refulsit,

Sic cluit in factis divinis ac venerandis.<sup>42</sup>

More generally, Boniface is described in flattering terms: Donizone calls him 'wonderful, illustrious, noble' ('mirificum, clarum, generosum').<sup>43</sup>

At the same time, Donizone underplayed or outright omitted several important details about Boniface's life which were not conducive to his praise of Matilda. For example, Boniface's ignoble murder in 1052 is not mentioned;<sup>44</sup> Donizone simply states that Boniface died and was buried on 6 May 1052:

Ipse die sexta madii post quippe kalendas

Deseruit terram, quem Christus ducat ad ethra.

Quando defunctus, terrae datus, estque sepultus,

Tunc quinquaginta duo tempora mille Dei stant.<sup>45</sup>

Likewise, Boniface's first wife, Richilde, is mentioned only once in Donizone's account and only in the context of Boniface securing an alliance with her father, Giselbert:

Marchio Richildam pretaxatus comitissam

Quae Giselberti de sanguine principis exit,

Duxit in uxorem, fuerat quia dives honore.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., bk. 1, ll. 1070–1.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., bk. 1, ll. 875.

<sup>44</sup> Robinson, 'Metrical Commentary', 7; Golinelli, 'Donizone', 202; Weinfurter, *Salian Century*, 107; Golinelli, 'Donizone e il suo poema per Matilde', xii.

<sup>45</sup> Donizone, *Vita Mathildis*, 2008, bk. 1, ll. 1124–7.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., bk. 1, ll. 518–20.

Acknowledging a more prominent role for Richilde had the potential to undermine the achievements of Matilda and her family and complicate the emperor's claims of inheritance to her lands. The near omission of Richilde is particularly notable as she was married to Boniface for more than 20 years and appears more frequently within his charters than Beatrice.<sup>47</sup> These omissions were necessary for Donizone's goals but they also mean that he presented an incomplete and distorted picture of Boniface.

Secondly, Donizone sought to legitimise Matilda's control of her lands. This was necessary as her authority had been called into question in 1081 when Henry IV had revoked her ducal and comital jurisdictions by placing her under the imperial ban.<sup>48</sup> Although this proved insufficient to oust Matilda, it did prompt a series of revolts against her by a number of her vassals and by cities formally under her control, most notably Pisa and Lucca.<sup>49</sup> Her jurisdictional position remained a concern even at the time of her death, as vassals and cities continued to oppose her citing imperial justification for their actions: Mantua, one of the most important of her holdings, was in rebellion against her between 1091 and 1114 on this basis.<sup>50</sup> Various authors have suggested that a desire to have the imperial ban lifted was a major factor in Matilda's attempts at reconciliation with Henry V

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<sup>47</sup> Tiziana Lazzari, 'Aziende fortificate, castelli e pievi: le basi patrimoniali dei poteri dei Canossa e le loro giurisdizioni', in *Matilde e il tesoro dei Canossa: tra castelli, monasteri e città*, ed. Arturo Calzona (Milano: Silvana, 2008), 109–10.

<sup>48</sup> Alfred Haverkamp, *Medieval Germany, 1056–1273*, trans. H. Braun and R. Mortimer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 117; Tilman Struve, 'Matilde di Toscana-Canossa ed Enrico IV', in *I Poteri dei Canossa*, ed. Golinelli, 428–31; Golinelli, 'L'Italia', 515.

<sup>49</sup> Haverkamp, *Medieval Germany*, 91; Golinelli, 'L'Italia', 515.

<sup>50</sup> Vito Fumagalli, 'I Canossa tra realtà regionale e ambizioni europee', in *Studi matildici, Atti e Memorie del III Convegno di Studi matildici (Reggio Emilia, 7 - 9 ottobre 1977)* (Modena: Aedes Muratoriana, 1978), 32–3; Vito Fumagalli, 'Mantova al Tempo di Matilde di Canossa', in *Sant'Anselmo, Mantova e la lotta per le Investiture. Atti del Convegno Internazi*, ed. Paolo Golinelli, *Il mondo medievale* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1987), 164–5; Golinelli, 'L'Italia', 516–7; Giuseppe Gardoni, 'Vescovi e città a Mantova dall'età carolingia al secolo XI', in *Le origini della diocesi di Mantova e le sedi episcopali dell'Italia settentrionale, IV-XI secolo*, ed. Giancarlo Andenna, Gian Pietro Brogiolo, and Renata Salvarani, *Antichità altoadriatiche* 63 (Trieste: Editreg, 2006), 229–30.

and her reluctance to oppose him even when he captured Pope Paschal II in 1111.<sup>51</sup> To this end, Donizone appears to have used his poem to claim grants of lands and rights to the Canossans in order to strengthen Matilda's claims to these territories. For example, Donizone has Tedald receiving the county of Ferrara from the papacy around 1000 but, as Vasina and Lazzari observe,<sup>52</sup> this is mentioned only by the poet. Although Tedald certainly held an array of lands in the area, he does not appear as count of Ferrara in any surviving documents.<sup>53</sup>

A similar aim can be perceived in Donizone's account of Boniface's life. Donizone underlines Boniface's resolute loyalty to a series of emperors in order to demonstrate that he had acquired his lands and positions with imperial consent. His depiction of the 1037 riot in Parma is of particular relevance, as the poet implicitly connects Boniface's actions in support of the emperor to his installation as duke of Tuscany. Boniface is often presented as the hero of the riot, arriving to rescue the emperor from an angry mob of *cives*, an account based on Donizone's assertion that Boniface's actions were integral to the defeat of the rioters.<sup>54</sup> Boniface is presented as

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<sup>51</sup> Glauco Maria Cantarella, *Pasquale II e il suo tempo*. Nuovo medioevo 54 (Napoli: Liguori, 1997), 93–104; David J. Hay, *The Military Leadership of Matilda of Canossa, 1046–1115* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 179–80.

<sup>52</sup> Augusto Vasina, 'Tedaldo di Canossa e Ferrara', in *Canossa prima di Matilde: atti del Convegno internazionale di studi Canossa prima di Matilde: origine della potenza dei da Canossa, svoltosi a Reggio Emilia il 19–20 giugno 1987* (Milano: Camunia, 1990), 167–76; Lazzari, 'Aziende fortificate, castelli e pievi', 107.

<sup>53</sup> Until fairly recently Donizone's account was accepted by most authors. See, for example, Francesca Bocchi, 'Istituzioni e società a Ferrara in età precomunale', *Atti e memorie della Deputazione Provinciale Ferrarese di Storia Patria* 3:26 (1979): 97–8; Andrea Castagnetti, 'Enti ecclesiastici, Canossa, Estensi, famiglie signorili e vassallatiche a Verona e a Ferrara', in *Structures féodales et féodalisme dans l'Occident méditerranéen: Xe–XIIIe siècles: bilan et perspectives de recherches: colloque international*, Collection de l'École française de Rome 44 (Rome: École française de Rome, 1980), 398–9; Richard Michael Tristiano, 'Vassals, Fiefs, and Social Mobility in Ferrara during the Middle Ages and Renaissance', *Medievalia et Humanistica* 15 (1987): 46.

<sup>54</sup> Donizone, *Vita Mathildis*, 2008, bk. 1, ll. 843–86; Gina Fasoli, 'La realtà cittadina nei territori canossiani', in *Studi matildici, Atti e Memorie del III Convegno di Studi matildici (Reggio Emilia, 7 – 9 ottobre 1977)*, 62; Schumann, *Authority and the Commune*, 145–6.

Conrad's saviour, prompting a mutual exchange of oaths and the installation of Boniface as duke of Tuscany – the passage is couched in superlative terms, describing Boniface's virtues and loyalty:

Qualiter augustus cum nostro principe iunctus  
Sit sacramento, referatur carmine certo.  
Imperium servans Chonradus eumque gubernans,  
Cognoscit vere plus cunctis posse valere  
Mirificum, clarum, generosum sepe relatum,  
Atheletam magnum Bonefacium venerandum,  
Ut iuraret ei rogat ipsum more fidelis,  
Ac ideo dixit quod marchia servit ipsi,  
Redderet atque vicem iurandi rex sibi quippe.<sup>55</sup>

Significantly, the *Vita Mathildis* is the only source to mention Boniface's presence at Parma in 1037 and his exchange of oaths with Conrad. The *Gesta Chuonradi II Imperatoris*, composed by Wipo, a contemporary of the riot and member of Conrad's court, makes no reference to Boniface and instead presents the king overcoming the rioters.<sup>56</sup> While Boniface may have played a key role in the leadership of the imperial host, it is just as likely that another figure was charged with this role. The incident at Parma in 1037 provided Donizone with an opportunity to underline the relationship between Boniface and Conrad and to present this loyalty to the imperial house as the

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<sup>55</sup> Donizone, *Vita Mathildis*, 2008, bk. 1, ll. 871–9.

<sup>56</sup> Wipo, 'Gesta Chuonradi II Imperatoris', in *Fontes saeculorum noni et undecimi historiam ecclesiae Hammaburgensis necnon imperii illustrantes*, vol. 11, eds. Werner Trillmich and Rudolf Büchner (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1978), bk. 37 p. 604.

reason for Boniface's acquisition of his lands and titles. This in turn was designed to strengthen Matilda's claims to legitimate rule over her father's lands.

Finally, Donizone sought to present Matilda as a paragon of imperial virtue in contrast to the imperial failings of Henry IV. This became an ongoing trope within Donizone's work, aimed at underlining the legitimacy of Matilda's rebellion against Henry IV and undermining the emperor's ideological position, which had brought conflict with the Gregorian papacy. To this end Donizone presented Matilda undertaking roles which were reserved for the emperor. She is shown as the custodian of royal power in Italy, partly through her alleged appointment as *vice regis* in Liguria by Henry V.<sup>57</sup> Donizone described the Mantuans involved in the conflict with Matilda from 1091 to 1114 as rebelling ('rebellare'): this term was normally reserved for actions undertaken against the rightful emperor or king.<sup>58</sup> Matilda upholds the peace of the kingdom of Italy, which should have been the responsibility of the emperor.<sup>59</sup> Donizone went to great lengths to present Matilda acting in imperial capacity, both as a means to underline the legitimacy of her position and to undermine the authority of her longstanding enemy, Henry IV.

The poet applied this imperial role to Matilda's predecessors. Adalbert Atto's defence of Adelaide, the future empress of Otto I, can be seen in this light: Adalbert is presented taking on the role of protector of the rightful ruler of the kingdom of Italy and hence of the kingdom itself.<sup>60</sup> This theme is more apparent in Donizone's account of Boniface. He is shown leading forces across the empire to deal with rebellions and other

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<sup>57</sup> Mario Nobili, 'L'ideologia politica in Donizone', in *Studi matildici, Atti e Memorie del III Convegno di Studi matildici (Reggio Emilia, 7 – 9 ottobre 1977)*, 270–1.

<sup>58</sup> Nobili, 'L'ideologia politica in Donizone', 269.

<sup>59</sup> Nobili, 'L'ideologia politica in Donizone', 270.

<sup>60</sup> Donizone, *Vita Mathildis*, 2008, bk. 1, ll. 96–396.

disturbances. In particular, Nobili has suggested that Donizone's account of Boniface's heroics was dictated by the poet's presentation of the Canossans in an imperial manner.<sup>61</sup> The riot in Parma in 1037, for example, was portrayed as a threat to imperial authority and to the person of the emperor himself.<sup>62</sup> In dispersing the riot, Boniface assumed an imperial role.

Donizone's depiction of Boniface and his family as the bearers of imperial responsibility necessitated a corresponding condemnation of the failures of the emperors. Again, this is most visible with Henry IV, but it can also be seen in Donizone's depiction of Henry III. Donizone presents two occasions on which Henry attempted to take Boniface prisoner through betrayal, both of which Boniface was able to foil through his cunning.<sup>63</sup> In particular, Boniface is a loyal and benign servant of a king who grew envious of his power and sought to overthrow him:

Cotidie princeps crescens Bonefacius iste,  
Alma fides ipsum servabat iure benignum.  
Invidia tactus nimia rex iam memoratus,  
Ingenio crudo meditatur prendere furto  
Illum, sub caelo potuit quem prendere nemo.<sup>64</sup>

Donizone used this section of his narrative to highlight the breakdown in the relationship between Boniface and Henry, while presenting Boniface as a loyal vassal and Henry acting in a manner unfitting for an emperor.<sup>65</sup> It is significant that Donizone avoided mentioning Boniface's subsequent actions against Henry's interests: Boniface made

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<sup>61</sup> Nobili, 'L'ideologia politica in Donizone', 272.

<sup>62</sup> Donizone, *Vita Mathildis*, 2008, bk. 1, ll. 850–2.

<sup>63</sup> Riversi, *La memoria di Canossa*, 262–3.

<sup>64</sup> Donizone, *Vita Mathildis*, 2008, bk. 1, ll. 1023–7.

<sup>65</sup> Riversi, *La memoria di Canossa*, 263.



common cause with Henry's opponents the counts of Tusculum and Guimar IV, duke of Salerno, in support of Benedict IX against Henry's candidate Damasus II.<sup>66</sup> This conflict was short-lived as Henry threatened to enter Italy in force to confront Boniface – who swiftly complied with imperial demands – but Donizone is careful not to mention this outright act of rebellion.<sup>67</sup> He omitted these events partly because they were not compatible with his portrayal of Boniface as noble, brave and undefeated, but also because they undermined his presentation of Boniface as a loyal imperial servant dealing with the unjust actions of Henry III.

These three themes combined to present an image of the Canossans as noble, cunning and, above all, loyal. At the same time, Donizone was always careful to avoid presenting the Canossans as having been in conflict with the German emperors prior to the outbreak of hostilities with Henry IV. Even in his depiction of the rivalry between Henry III and Boniface, Donizone did not refer to open war between the two. This distinction was important for Donizone as it allowed him to put forward the failed political relationship between Henry IV and Matilda as an anomaly in an otherwise exemplary record of obedience and loyalty to the imperial throne.<sup>68</sup> Henry V, the emperor at the time of the poem's composition, could hardly object to Matilda's opposition to his father: he had after all rebelled against and overthrown him. By highlighting the family's previous loyalty, Donizone helped to reinforce the 1111 reconciliation between Matilda and Henry V.<sup>69</sup> To this end he omitted any details that could undermine this narrative.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Bertolini, 'Bonifacio, marchese e duca di Toscana', 105–6; Anton, 'Bonifaz von Canossa', 552–3; Golinelli, 'L'Italia', 512.

<sup>67</sup> Bertolini, 'Bonifacio, marchese e duca di Toscana', 107–8; Anton, 'Bonifaz von Canossa', 552–3.

<sup>68</sup> Riversi, *La memoria di Canossa*, 264.

<sup>69</sup> Riversi, *La memoria di Canossa*, 61.

<sup>70</sup> Riversi, *La memoria di Canossa*, 263–4.

### **The 1013–14 expedition into Italy**

Donizone's political and rhetorical goals therefore led him to portray Boniface as a powerful noble, an ally and protector of the emperor and as a paragon of imperial virtue. While historians have questioned the reliability of Donizone's poem as a historical source,<sup>71</sup> Donizone's account has heavily influenced modern perceptions of Boniface – and generally his characterisation has been accepted.<sup>72</sup> Donizone's exaggeration of Canossan virtues is unremarkable within a panegyric, but he also used his description of Boniface to cement the position of the Canossans as loyal allies of the emperor. A review of the charter evidence for Boniface and his relationship with Henry II during his second expedition into Italy provides substantial evidence that this was not always the case.

Henry II descended into Italy for the second time in 1013 to reinstall Pope Benedict VIII in Rome and claim the imperial crown. While in Italy, the emperor also took measures to undermine Arduin of Ivrea, who still claimed the kingdom of Italy. Henry was successful in all of these goals: he defeated the Roman opponents of Benedict, was crowned emperor on 14 February 1014 and Arduin retreated into the monastery of Fruttuaria shortly after the emperor's departure.<sup>73</sup>

Henry's Roman ambitions are reflected in the charter record. Of the 40 known charters produced by Henry's court in Italy, eight were produced in Rome, emphasising

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<sup>71</sup> Golinelli, 'Donizone', 201–2; Golinelli, 'Donizone e il suo poema per Matilde', xi–xii.

<sup>72</sup> Cinzio Violante, 'Aspetti della politica italiana di Enrico III prima della sua discesa in Italia (1039–1046)', *Rivista Storica Italiana* 64 (1952): 167–72; Fasoli, 'Note sulla feudalità canossiana', 217–29; François Menant, *Lombardia feudale: studi sull'aristocrazia padana nei secoli X–XIII*. Cultura e storia 4 (Milano: Vita e pensiero, 1992), 57–63.

<sup>73</sup> Girolamo Arnaldi, 'Arduino, re d'Italia', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 4, ed. Alberto Maria Ghisalberti (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1962), 60.

his right to intervene there.<sup>74</sup> In these documents Henry was referred to as ‘imperator’ for the first time; previously he had been called ‘rex’. His relatively brief stay in Rome allowed Henry to state his authority within the city and transmit his new imperial status across the empire.

Henry’s attempts to undermine Arduin’s power in Ivrea and north-west Italy are also visible in his charters. In 1014, the bishop of Novara had his rights confirmed and extended by Henry, to include control over the markets in Novara itself and in Ossola on the main Alpine route into the county.<sup>75</sup> The bishop of Treviso likewise had his rights, as granted by Otto III, reconfirmed.<sup>76</sup> These were two of the three cities (the third was Como), noted by Arnulf of Milan as victims of Arduin’s rebellion, and these grants represent the empowerment of these bishops and renewal of their bonds with the emperor.<sup>77</sup> In the same year, Henry also provided an extensive and unprecedented grant to the monastery of Fruttuaria which included confirmation of rights in the counties or dioceses of Ivrea, Turin, Vercelli, Novara, Milan, Pavia, Asti, Acqui, Albenga, Albinganensi, Savona and Terdonensi.<sup>78</sup> This charter is significant as the monastery at Fruttuaria was a powerful institution within Arduin’s core territory. It also had a personal connection to Arduin: as king, he issued a charter to the monastery in 1005 and would

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<sup>74</sup> Harry Bresslau, ed., ‘Die Urkunden Heinrichs II’, in *Die Urkunden Heinrichs II und Arduin*. Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae 3 (Hanover: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1900), nos. 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290.

<sup>75</sup> Bresslau, ed., ‘Die Urkunden Heinrichs II’, no. 306: ‘mercatum ipsius Nouarie, civitatis ... aliud etiam mercatum in Ossula ... concessisse’.

<sup>76</sup> Bresslau, ed., ‘Die Urkunden Heinrichs II’, no. 313; T. Sickel, ed., ‘Die Urkunden Otto des III’, in *Die Urkunden Otto des II und Otto des III*. Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae 2 (Hanover: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1893), no. 225.

<sup>77</sup> Arnulf, *Liber gestorum recentium*, ed. Claudia Zey. Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in Usus Scholarum Separatim 67 (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1994), Book I. 16.

<sup>78</sup> Bresslau, ed., ‘Die Urkunden Heinrichs II’, no. 305: ‘Cum his etiam confirmamus per hanc p̄ceptalem constitutionem supra dicto c̄nobia semper habenda omnia quę habet vel quę habere debet in his super scriptis episcopatibus atque comitatibus Ipporiensi, Taurinensi, Vercellensi, Novariensi, Mediolanensi, Ticinensi, Astensi, Aquensi, Albensi, Albinganensi, Savonensi et Terdonensi.’

end his life there.<sup>79</sup> Through this charter Henry and his notaries took the opportunity to claim authority over a broad area encompassing Arduin's lands and main areas of support as well as the key cities of Milan and Pavia. By claiming the ability to make this grant, Henry underlined his right to intervene in all of these areas. In combination, these documents were a powerful statement of imperial authority designed thoroughly to undermine Arduin's power.

However, although these documents are indications of Henry's stance towards Arduin, the charter record as a whole suggests that Arduin was not his foremost concern. In 1013 and 1014 Arduin was in no position to oppose Henry: the would-be king of Italy lost almost all his support during Henry's first Italian expedition in 1004.<sup>80</sup> According to Thietmar of Merseberg, Arduin sent legates to Henry and proposed that he surrender his crown in exchange for being allowed to retain Ivrea.<sup>81</sup> By Thietmar's account, Henry refused this offer and, after the emperor returned to Germany, Arduin committed a few last acts of violence against his opponents in Ivrea before being forced into retirement at the monastery of Fruttuaria by Henry's supporters.<sup>82</sup> Arduin was still a concern in 1013 and 1014, but was not the dangerous opponent Henry had faced in 1004: the emperor could rely on his local supporters to defeat Arduin. Henry did issue some documents to counter Arduin and strengthen his opponents, but the majority of the charter production of Henry's court was targeted at different areas.

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<sup>79</sup> Harry Bresslau, ed., 'Die Urkunden Arduin', in *Die Urkunden Heinrichs II und Arduin*. *Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae* 3 (Hanover: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1900), no. 9.

<sup>80</sup> Arnaldi, 'Arduino, re d'Italia', 60.

<sup>81</sup> Thietmar of Merseburg, *Die Chronik des Bischofs Thietmar von Merseburg und ihre Korveier Überarbeitung*, ed. Robert Holtzmann. *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum*, new series 9 (Berlin: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1935), Book 6: 93. 'Post longam animi a exestuantis deliberacionem legatos ad regem misit, qui comitatum quendam sibi dari peterent et coronam suimet cum filiis ei redditurum veraciter promitterent.'

<sup>82</sup> Thietmar of Merseburg, *Die Chronik des Bischofs Thietmar von Merseburg*, ed. Holtzmann, Book 7: 2, 24.

Within this expedition, the typical narrative has Boniface acting as a loyal supporter of the emperor. Most notably, Boniface's marriage to Richilde, between 1010 and 1015, is often cited as evidence of his pro-imperial stance: Richilde's parents were Gisibert, the count of Bergamo, and Anselda, the aunt of Ulrich Manfred, the margrave of Turin, and her marriage to Boniface is presented as a means to separate these families from Arduin and secure their support for Henry.<sup>83</sup> This narrative follows Donizone's brief depiction of the marriage between Boniface and Richilde. However, as Lazzari argues, Richilde's marriage to Boniface should not be seen as an indication of an imperial alliance with her close and extended family. Lazzari makes three central points to support this thesis: Richilde's family, the Gisilbertini, were long-standing supporters of Arduin of Ivrea and there is no sign that this changed after the marriage; Richilde's first marriage transferred her duties to her new family hence her marriage to Boniface was motivated, from her perspective, by a need to protect her daughter not to provide an alliance for her old family; Gisibert, Richilde's father, was dead by October 1010 (hence before her marriage to Boniface) and her brothers were more concerned with squabbling over their inheritance than in Arduin's renewed rebellion.<sup>84</sup> Lazzari concludes that the marriage between Boniface and Richilde was motivated by a Canossan desire to extend their territory through the acquisition of Richilde's considerable inheritance, combined with Richilde's need to secure her position and that of her daughter.<sup>85</sup> This analysis is convincing – neither Richilde's brothers nor her uncle (Ulrich Manfred) appear as

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<sup>83</sup> Bertolini, 'Bonifacio, marchese e duca di Toscana', 97; Menant, *Lombardia feudale*, 57–63; Rossella Rinaldi, 'Da Adalberto Atto a Bonifacio. Note e riflessioni per l'edizione di un codice diplomatico canossano prematildico', *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo e Archivio Muratoriano* 101 (1997): 97.

<sup>84</sup> Lazzari, 'Aziende fortificate, castelli e pievi', 109.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

supporters of Henry II in 1013 or 1014 – and underlines Donizone’s willingness to claim self-serving actions of the Canossan family as decisions made for the benefit of the German emperors. There is no reason to think that this marriage was made in order to cement Henry’s power in Italy. Instead, it allowed Boniface to acquire Richilde’s extensive landholdings in Brescia, Mantua, Ferrara, Reggio, Cremona and Verona without recourse to imperial authority.<sup>86</sup>

This marriage was only the latest in a series of extensions of Canossan power without recourse to Henry II.<sup>87</sup> Lazzari highlights Tedald’s marriage to Guilla, daughter of Margrave Ugo of Tuscany, as the primary means by which Tedald extended his influence into Tuscany.<sup>88</sup> This brought a large and strategically important region under Canossan influence without the support of the emperor. Further territory was acquired across the Po basin from various bishoprics through both purchase<sup>89</sup> and usurpation.<sup>90</sup> For example, Boniface systematically seized many of the lands of the cathedral of Mantua – as evidenced by a series of appeals by later bishops for the return of these lands.<sup>91</sup> Boniface’s usurpation of Church lands violated the emperor’s guarantees of protection and was at odds with Henry’s policy of empowering bishops and abbots.<sup>92</sup> By eroding the bishops’ powers, Boniface denied the emperor potential allies and undermined imperial authority in the region. Likewise, Boniface’s construction of a palace in Mantua and his use of it to hold court and issue judgements was a prominent usurpation of status, almost

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<sup>86</sup> Anton, ‘Bonifaz von Canossa’, 533; Rinaldi, ‘Da Adalberto Atto a Bonifacio’, 74–6.

<sup>87</sup> Lazzari, ‘Aziende fortificate, castelli e pievi’, 107.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>89</sup> Fumagalli, ‘I Canossa’, 31.

<sup>90</sup> Golinelli, *Matilde e i Canossa*, 82–5; Golinelli, ‘L’Italia’, 513–14.

<sup>91</sup> Fumagalli, ‘Mantova al tempo di Matilde’, 162.

<sup>92</sup> Carlo Guido Mor, ‘Dalla caduta dell’Impero al Comune’, *Verona e il suo territorio* 2 (1964): 82–5; Vito Fumagalli, *Terra e società nell’Italia padana: i secoli IX e X* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 1976), 44–5; Fumagalli, ‘Mantova al Tempo di Matilde’, 162; Gardoni, ‘Vescovi e città’, 224–6.

of a regality, and can be read as a symbolic snub to Henry's authority.<sup>93</sup> This was a threat to the royal position comparable to that posed by Hermann Billung's assumption of the royal honours at the palace and cathedral of Magdeburg in 972 during Otto I's absence in Italy.<sup>94</sup> This usurpation by Hermann marked the beginning of visibly strained relations between the emperor and his previously ostensibly loyal supporter.<sup>95</sup> By flaunting his power in such a manner Boniface made a strong statement of his autonomy from Henry. In all of these cases the Canossans acted in their own interests, not as supporters of the German emperors.

This alternative interpretation of Boniface's marriage and his political stance coincides with the production of a series of charters by the imperial court which seem to have been designed to counter or limit Canossan power and expansion. Although several charters were issued by Henry's court to underline his authority in Rome and Ivrea, many others dealt with regions that were not connected to these conflicts. A substantial number of documents instead focused on eastern Lombardy, western Veneto, Emilia and Tuscany: all areas in which Boniface and his family had recently extended their influence.

The strongest individual piece of evidence that Henry adopted a tactic of limiting Canossan power is a charter issued to the *arimanni* of Mantua in January or February 1014 while Henry was in Ravenna.<sup>96</sup> The *arimanni* were here synonymous with terms such as *homines* or *populus* used in similar charters, and refer to a loosely defined group

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<sup>93</sup> Fumagalli, *Terra e società*, 47; Ercolano Marani, 'Topografia e urbanistica di Mantova al tempo di Sant'Anselmo', in *Sant'Anselmo, Mantova e la lotta per le Investiture. Atti del Convegno Internazi*, ed. Paolo Golinelli, *Il mondo medievale* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1987), 215–6; Vito Fumagalli, *Uomini e paesaggi medievali* (Bologna: Mulino, 1989), 115; Gardoni, 'Vescovi e città', 224–6.

<sup>94</sup> Karl Leyser, *Rule and Conflict in an Early Medieval Society: Ottonian Saxony* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 160.

<sup>95</sup> Leyser, *Rule and Conflict in an Early Medieval Society*, 160.

<sup>96</sup> Bresslau, ed., 'Die Urkunden Heinrichs II', no. 303.

within the city of Mantua.<sup>97</sup> This is one of the first of several documents providing rights and powers to urban groups in Italy and can be connected to the emergence of the proto-commune as a political power.<sup>98</sup> The language within the document does not correspond to that used in local documents and this strongly suggests that the charter was instigated by the imperial court.<sup>99</sup> Rinaldi briefly, and correctly, posits that the document was created with the intention of stemming Boniface's power,<sup>100</sup> but the political implications of this document have otherwise been ignored or undermined. Bertolini discards the charter as politically insignificant, arguing that it simply safeguarded rights and privileges already enjoyed by its recipients.<sup>101</sup> However, this does not fully explain the 1014 charter or its place within the imperial documents of 1013 to 1015. Even if the 1014 charter only formalised existing rights, and there is no indication that this was the case, it still represented a statement of the imperial right to issue these privileges. Moreover, Bertolini and others present a fundamentally similar charter to the Mantuans produced by the emperor Henry III in 1055 as evidence for an imperial move against the Canossans.<sup>102</sup> Bertolini's analysis here is inconsistent.

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<sup>97</sup> Ottavio Banti, "'Civitas' e 'comune' nelle fonti italiane dei secoli XI e XII", in *Forme di potere e struttura sociale in Italia nel medioevo*, ed. Gabriella Rosseti (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1977), 219–20.

<sup>98</sup> Giovanni Tabacco, *I liberi del re nell'Italia carolingia e postcarolingia* (Spoleto: Fondazione CISAM, 1966), 167; Banti, "'Civitas' e 'comune'", 219–20; Marco Morselli, *Le origini di un comune cittadino: analisi di alcuni documenti del Liber privilegiorum comunis Mantue* (Modena: Università degli studi di Modena, 1992), 51.

<sup>99</sup> Robert Houghton, 'The Vocabulary of Groups in Eleventh Century Mantua', *Early Medieval Europe* forthcoming.

<sup>100</sup> Rossella Rinaldi, 'Un'abbazia di famiglia: La fondazione di Polirone e i Canossa', in *Storia di san Benedetto Polirone: Le origini (961-1125)*, ed. Paolo Golinelli, 1. ed, Il Mondo medievale (Bologna: Pàtron, 1998), 49.

<sup>101</sup> Bertolini, 'Bonifacio, marchese e duca di Toscana', 99.

<sup>102</sup> Vittore Colorni, *Il territorio mantovano nel Sacro Romano Impero. I, Periodo comitale e periodo comunale (800–1274)* (Milano: Giuffrè, 1959), 46; Bertolini, 'Bonifacio, marchese e duca di Toscana', 109–10; Andrea Castagnetti, *Società e politica a Ferrara dall'età postcarolingia alla signoria estense (sec. X–XIII)* (Rome: Pàtron, 1985), 44; Morselli, *Le origini di un comune*, 54.



The 1014 charter to the *arimanni* of Mantua is important because it empowered a group at the physical centre of Canossan power. The earliest prominent member of the House of Canossa, Adalbert Atto, was count of Mantua by 977 and the family progressively entrenched themselves in the city and county over the following century and a half. Mantua was central to Boniface's holdings: it was here that he constructed a palace<sup>103</sup> – indeed, Mantua was the only city in which Boniface had a palace.<sup>104</sup> The foundation and systematic enrichment of the great monastery of San Benedetto Polirone in the county is also an indication of the importance assigned to the city, as it provided the Canossans with a strategically placed and loyal ally in the region.<sup>105</sup> Mantua controlled river traffic and crossing points on the Po and the Mincio.<sup>106</sup> The river network was of vital importance to communication links and Mantua was at a strategic point.<sup>107</sup> Therefore, the 1014 imperial charter emphasised Henry's right and ability to intervene in the heart of Canossan territory. The document gave the *arimanni* the right to carry out

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<sup>103</sup> Fumagalli, 'Mantova al tempo di Matilde'; Marani, 'Topografia e urbanistica di Mantova', 215–16; Fumagalli, *Uomini e paesaggi medievali*, 115; Gardoni, 'Vescovi e città', 224–6.

<sup>104</sup> Chris Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy: Central Power and Local Society, 400–1000* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), 184.

<sup>105</sup> Paolo Golinelli, 'Dipendenze polironiane in Emilia e rapporti del monastero con gli enti ecclesiastici della regione nei secoli XI–XII', in *L'Italia nel quadro dell'espansione europea del monachesimo chuniacense. Atti del Convegno internazionale di storia medievale, Pescia 26–28 novembre 1981*, ed. Cinzio Violante, Ameleto Spiccianni, and Giovanni Spinelli, Italia benedettina 8 (Pescia: Convegno internazionale di storia medievale, 1981), 117–41; Arturo Carlo Quintavalle, *Wiligelmo e Matilde: l'officina romanica*, Civiltà medievale (Milano: Electa, 1991); Odoardo Rombaldi, 'I monasteri canossani in Emilia e Lombardia', in *I Poteri dei Canossa, da Reggio Emilia all'Europa: atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Reggio Emilia-Carpineti, 29–31 ottobre 1992)*, ed. Paolo Golinelli, Il mondo medievale (Bologna: Pàtron, 1994), 279–307; Paolo Piva, 'L'abbazia di Polirone nel XII secolo: architettura e vita monastica. Una lettura comparata della documentazione archeologica e scritta', in *Arredi liturgici e architettura*, ed. Arturo Carlo Quintavalle and Andrea De Marchi (Milano: Electa, 2003), 53–85.

<sup>106</sup> Fumagalli, *Terra e società*, 25–49; Fumagalli, 'Mantova al Tempo di Matilde', 159–60; Tincani, 'Le corti dei Canossa', 255; Elke Goetz, *Beatrix von Canossa und Tuszien: eine Untersuchung zur Geschichte des 11. Jahrhunderts* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1995), 50.

<sup>107</sup> Paolo Golinelli, 'Culto dei santi e monasteri nella politica dei Canossa nella pianura padana', in *Studi matildici, Atti e Memorie del III Convegno di Studi matildici (Reggio Emilia, 7–9 ottobre 1977)*, 427–44; Morselli, *Le origini di un comune*, 10; Adriaan E. Verhulst, *The Carolingian Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 97–103.

their business on either side of the river Tartaro and as far as the River Oglio.<sup>108</sup> These rivers, both tributaries of the Po, defined the boundaries of the county of Mantua. By issuing rights to the *arimanni* across the entire county of Mantua, Henry presented himself as the superior lord and demonstrated his right to intervene within the region. Moreover, he did this within and around the most important of Boniface's holdings. This element of the charter can therefore be seen as a declaration of Henry's authority within the centre of Boniface's domain.

The 1014 charter also granted substantial trading rights across northern Italy and hence illustrates Henry's claims to authority over much of the Po basin. These rights were granted in two distinct areas: upstream from Mantua along the Mincio to Sommolago on Lake Garda and downstream on the Po to Argenta, Ferrara and Ravenna.<sup>109</sup> These areas describe a route between the Alps and the key city of Ravenna, a route which was of importance to the German kings for access to and across Italy. More importantly, the majority of these areas were within or around the Canossan sphere of influence.

The absence of Boniface and his client Mantuan bishop within this document further underlines Henry's intent to counter Boniface's authority. A charter issued to the *homines* of Savona later in 1014 contained fundamentally similar rights to that issued to the *arimanni* of Mantua.<sup>110</sup> However, the author of this later document states that it was produced at the request of Ardemann, the bishop of Savona.<sup>111</sup> The charter to the *homines*

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<sup>108</sup> Bresslau, ed., 'Die Urkunden Heinrichs II', no. 278: 'Scilicet utrasque ripas fluminis Tartari, deinde sursum usque ad flumen Oley'.

<sup>109</sup> Harry Bresslau, ed., *Die Urkunden Heinrichs III*. Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae 5 (Berlin: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1931), no. 356: 'ita videlicet ut non dent ripaticum nec tholoneum in Ravenna, in Argenta, in Ferraria, in Summolacu'.

<sup>110</sup> Bresslau, ed., 'Die Urkunden Heinrichs II', no. 303.

<sup>111</sup> Bresslau, ed., 'Die Urkunden Heinrichs II', no. 303: 'qualiter interventu Ardemani episcopi Saonensis

of Savona was accompanied by a second charter which reiterated the rights of the bishop of Savona as granted by Otto III.<sup>112</sup> This practice of issuing statements of episcopal rights alongside statements of urban rights was not atypical; a 1055 charter to the *cives* of Mantua which repeated the rights of the 1014 document was likewise accompanied by a charter to the city's bishop.<sup>113</sup> The absence of this connection in Mantua in 1014 is a strong indication that Henry intended to balance the power of the bishop and the Canossans in the city.

While in Ravenna, Henry also issued charters upholding the rights and immunities of the cathedral chapters of Ferrara and Bologna.<sup>114</sup> These documents are almost identical to earlier grants made by Otto III and Otto I respectively and it is possible that they were presented by their recipients for consideration by the emperor: although similar rights are issued in both charters the language of the texts is very different.<sup>115</sup> However, they should not be dismissed simply as inconsequential reconfirmations of existing rights. Even if the charters were produced at the behest of their recipients, they still represented statements of imperial authority, and in both cases these documents dealt with areas subject to Canossan influence. Bertolini identifies Ferrara alongside Mantua as a city dominated by Boniface,<sup>116</sup> and the family had held considerable lands in the county since the time of Tedald.<sup>117</sup> Bologna itself was never controlled formally by the Canossans, but they were

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nostrique dilecti fidelis'.

<sup>112</sup> Bresslau, 'H2', no. 304; Sickel, 'O3', no. 328.

<sup>113</sup> Bresslau, ed., *Die Urkunden Heinrichs III*, nos. 355, 356.

<sup>114</sup> Bresslau, ed., 'Die Urkunden Heinrichs II', nos. 279, 280.

<sup>115</sup> Sickel, ed., 'Die Urkunden Otto des III', no. 275; T. Sickel, ed., 'Die Urkunden Otto I', in *Die Urkunden Konrad I, Heinrich I und Otto I*. Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae 1 (Hanover: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1884), no. 372.

<sup>116</sup> Bertolini, 'Bonifacio, marchese e duca di Toscana', 109.

<sup>117</sup> Lazzari, 'Aziende fortificate, castelli e pievi', 107.

nevertheless major landholders within the county by the start of the eleventh century.<sup>118</sup>

These two charters dealt with institutions and territories which were facing Canossan domination or expansion in much the same manner as the charter to the Mantuans issued at the same time and this is unlikely to have been coincidental. In combination, these three documents were designed to underline Henry's support for institutions which could counter Canossan power.

While in the Ravenna, Henry installed his brother Arnold as archbishop of the city.<sup>119</sup> This was one of the most powerful ecclesiastical positions within northern Italy: the archbishop held considerable lands and rights in and around Ravenna and was at least influential over his suffragan bishops, including several within Canossan territory (Bologna, Modena, Reggio and Parma).<sup>120</sup> Henry quickly incorporated his brother into the relationship networks of northern Italy. On 7 May 1014, in Pavia, Arnold appears as witness to a confirmation of the property of the monastery of San Salvatore alongside Otto, count of Pavia, the bishops Rainald of Pavia and Peter of Novara, and the Margraves Otbert and Anselm.<sup>121</sup> By placing a close family member in this office and connecting him with other key figures in the region Henry created a counter to Canossan expansion into eastern Romagna.

After leaving Ravenna in early February 1014, Henry continued to issue charters which can be interpreted as balances to Canossan power. While in Fasciano later in 1014

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<sup>118</sup> Tiziana Lazzari, 'Vassalli matildici a Bologna: Pietro d'Ermengarda e la sua discendenza', in *I Poteri dei Canossa*, ed. Golinelli, 239.

<sup>119</sup> Bresslau, ed., 'Die Urkunden Heinrichs II', nos. 290, 299; Augusto Vasina, 'Arnoldo', in *Dizionario Biografico Degli Italiani*, vol. 4, ed. Ghisalberti, 256.

<sup>120</sup> Gina Fasoli, 'Il dominio territoriale degli arcivescovi di Ravenna fra l'VIII e l'IX secolo', in *I poteri temporali dei vescovi in Italia e in Germania nel medioevo*, eds. Carlo Guido Mor and Heinrich Schmidinger (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1979), 87.

<sup>121</sup> Bresslau, ed., 'Die Urkunden Heinrichs II', no. 299: 'Otto comes palatii et comes uisus comitatu Ticinensi iusticiam faciendam ac deliberandam, adessent cum eo Arnaldus Ravenensis archiepiscopus, Rainaldus eius Ticinensis, Petrus Novariensis episcopi, Otbertus et Anselmus germanis marchionibus'.

Henry recognised a donation to the bishopric of Bergamo by Atto, the count of Bergamo, and his wife Ferlinda.<sup>122</sup> This document connects Henry with both the bishop and the count of Bergamo, an area in which the Canossans had been extending their landholding and influence, most notably through Boniface's marriage to Richilde. The charter suggests that Atto was installed as count of Bergamo in succession to Giselbert, Richilde's father. Atto's origins are unknown, but he does not appear to have been a relative of Richilde and neither of her brothers, Lanfranc and Manfred, ever appears with the title. Essentially a family with connections to Boniface was removed from a position of power and replaced by a new individual with ties to the emperor. This all suggests that Henry was attempting to strengthen a family which was independent of the Canossans while underlining his authority to take action in this area.

An imperial charter produced in Pavia on 12 May 1014 for the monastery at Leno in the county of Brescia is a further example of Henry intervening in a region of interest to the Canossans.<sup>123</sup> This document reiterated the lands and rights issued to the monastery by Otto I and Otto III, but also extended them to areas across the county of Brescia.<sup>124</sup> For example, Henry's charter granted the monastery control of the markets at Marcaria, Noceto, Medesano and Aureliano.<sup>125</sup> Canossan influence in Brescia had been developed by Tedald, who was count there and was a major landholder in the county,<sup>126</sup> and his brother Godfrey (Boniface's uncle), who was bishop of the city in the late tenth

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<sup>122</sup> Bresslau, ed., 'Die Urkunden Heinrichs II', no. 293: 'Cortem Lemennem cum omnibus castellis sibi pertinentibus, videlicet Briuio et Lauello, sicut Atto comes et Ferlinda sua coniux episcopatus praefati Alexandri martyris per paginam testamenti tradidit.'

<sup>123</sup> Bresslau, ed., 'Die Urkunden Heinrichs II', no. 300.

<sup>124</sup> Sickel, ed., 'Die Urkunden Otto I', 240; Sickel, ed., 'Die Urkunden Otto des III', 405.

<sup>125</sup> Bresslau, ed., 'Die Urkunden Heinrichs II', 300: 'mercatum in eodem loco [Macreta], in Noceto, in Medesiano, in Aureliano'.

<sup>126</sup> Bertolini, 'Bonifacio, marchese e duca di Toscana', 97; Schumann, *Authority and the Commune*, 145; Vito Fumagalli, 'Il potere civile dei vescovi italiani al tempo di Ottone I', in *I poteri temporali dei vescovi*, eds. Mor and Schmidinger, 77–8; Golinelli, 'L'Italia', 511.

century.<sup>127</sup> Boniface's marriage to Richilde extended this influence.<sup>128</sup> Leno lay between the core of Canossan lands in Mantua, Reggio and Modena and an area where Boniface had extended his influence in the years immediately prior to 1013 in Brescia and Bergamo. As a result, Henry's support for the monastery seems to have been designed to balance the expansion of Canossan power.

In a pair of charters issued in Verona on 21 May 1014 Henry upheld the rights of the monastery of San Zeno and the cathedral chapter of the city.<sup>129</sup> No new rights or lands were included in these documents, but they do demonstrate Henry's interest in maintaining control of Verona and the Alpine passes into Italy. Of greater importance here is Henry's installation of John the son of Jadon, count of Garda, as bishop of Verona in 1015. In an episcopal charter issued to the monastery of San Zeno in 1022 John indicates that he was promoted to the bishopric because of the loyalty of his father to the imperial cause:

Venerabilis itaque noster Dominus Cesar Heincricus pro suae animae remedio, nec non etiam pro dilectissimi Patris nostri Jadonis servitio devotissime sibi impenso hujus sanctae sedis nobis curam attribuens sepissime nos commonuit, atque imperialibus praeceptis instruxit ut Ecclesiarum Dei status provideremus obnixi.<sup>130</sup>

This claim underlines the likelihood of the involvement of the emperor in the selection of the bishop of Verona, and the installation of John in this role in conjunction to the

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<sup>127</sup> Schumann, *Authority and the Commune*, 145; Roland Pauler, *Das Regnum Italiae in ottonischer Zeit: Markgrafen, Grafen und Bischöfe als politische Kräfte*. Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom, 54 (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1982), 77.

<sup>128</sup> Bertolini, 'Bonifacio, marchese e duca di Toscana', 97; Rinaldi, 'Da Adalberto Atto a Bonifacio', 75–6; Lazzari, 'Aziende fortificate, castelli e pievi', 109.

<sup>129</sup> Bresslau, ed., 'Die Urkunden Heinrichs II', nos. 309, 310.

<sup>130</sup> G. B. Biancolini, *Notizie storiche delle chiese di Verona*, vol. 2 (Verona: A. Scolari, 1749), 470.

reference to Jadon suggests that Henry was attempting to establish this family in a position of strength in the region. This argument is strengthened through the creation of John's brother as count of Verona at around the same time.<sup>131</sup> This combination of appointments gave John and his family a firm hold on the county from which they could counter Canossan expansion: the Canossans had steadily acquired a series of properties connecting Verona to their seat of power in Mantua, most notably through Boniface's marriage to Richilde.<sup>132</sup>

Parma was another area in which the Canossans had extended their control in the years around 1000. Some of the family's oldest holdings were in the county of Parma: Siegfried, Boniface's great-grandfather, had held allodial property there.<sup>133</sup> Since then the Canossans had expanded their holdings and Boniface's relative, another Siegfried (the son of the brother of Adalbert Atto), was bishop of Parma from 981 until his death in 1015.<sup>134</sup> This Siegfried was recognised by Henry in a 1003 confirmation of control over the abbey of Nonantola and in a 1004 general confirmation of his rights as established by Otto I.<sup>135</sup> These charters were both issued at the request of Tedald ('per interventum nostri fidelis Teodaldi marchionis') which demonstrates his active political connection with both his cousin Siegfried and with the emperor. During Henry's first Italian expedition, the bishopric of Parma was firmly tied to the Canossans through family and politics. However, this changed dramatically after Siegfried's death: the emperor had

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<sup>131</sup> Vittorio Cavallari, 'Il conte di Verona fra il X e l'XI secolo', *Atti e Memorie della Accademia di Agricoltura, Scienza, e Lettere di Verona* 142 (1965): 203–74; Maureen C. Miller, *The Formation of a Medieval Church: Ecclesiastical Change in Verona, 950–1150* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 145; Bonacini, 'Sulle strade dei Canossa', 21.

<sup>132</sup> Rinaldi, 'Da Adalberto Atto a Bonifacio', 74–5.

<sup>133</sup> Lazzari, 'Aziende fortificate, castelli e pievi', 97–9.

<sup>134</sup> Pauler, *Das Regnum Italiae*, 110–15.

<sup>135</sup> Bresslau, ed., 'Die Urkunden Heinrichs II', nos. 41, 71; Sickel, ed., 'Die Urkunden Otto I', 239.

installed his chancellor, also named Henry, as bishop of Parma by 4 October 1015.<sup>136</sup> This Henry appeared as witness in all of the emperor's charters in Italy from 1013 onwards which connected him to key individuals in the region, including those noted above as potential balances to Canossan power, and provided him with basic political relationships with all these figures. The bishopric of Parma was a very powerful ecclesiastical holding with extensive lands and immunities and the rights of jurisdiction within a three mile radius of the city.<sup>137</sup> The appointment of a prominent figure from the imperial court with strong connections across northern Italy to such a powerful position on the edge of Canossan territory created a balancing force to their expansion. This was a major change in the political structure of this region as it replaced a key Canossan ally with someone who was very close to the emperor.

The installation of Henry as bishop of Parma was accompanied by the confirmation of the farm (*corte*) and other lands and buildings at Nirone to Bernard, the count of Parma.<sup>138</sup> Nirone lay to the south of Parma and dominated a major Apennine pass and so the charter is of strategic importance. The previous counts of Parma had served as a political balance to the Canossans and it appears that Henry intended to use Bernard in a similar way.<sup>139</sup> It is notable that Henry referred to Bernard as his most faithful count.<sup>140</sup> This superlative is not unique within imperial charters. For example: a privilege of Conrad II confirming goods to the cathedral chapter of Florence produced in Verona on 10 July 1037 referred to Boniface as 'our most faithful margrave'.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Bresslau, ed., 'Die Urkunden Heinrichs II', no. 336.

<sup>137</sup> Schumann, *Authority and the Commune*, 71.

<sup>138</sup> Bresslau, ed., 'Die Urkunden Heinrichs II', no. 338.

<sup>139</sup> Schumann, *Authority and the Commune*, 42–3.

<sup>140</sup> Bresslau, ed., 'Die Urkunden Heinrichs II', no. 338: 'Bernardo Parmensi comiti fidelissimo nostro'.

<sup>141</sup> Harry Bresslau, ed., *Die Urkunden Konrads II, mit Nachträgen zu den Urkunden Heinrichs II*. *Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae* 4 (Hanover: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1909), no.



However, the appearance of the term to describe individuals in these documents was nevertheless unusual and its appearance is generally associated with an emphasis on the political connection between the emperor and the named individual. The use of the term here underlines Henry's support for Bernard.

In the late tenth century the Canossans had also extended their influence south of the Apennines into the duchy of Tuscany. Lazzari chronicles this expansion and argues that the main source for this expansion was Tedald's marriage to Guilla, whom she identifies as the daughter of Uberr (c.925–c.970), duke of Tuscany and illegitimate son of King Hugh of Italy, and therefore the sister of Ugo (c.950–21 December 1001), duke of Tuscany.<sup>142</sup> The death of Ugo marked the extinction of the male line of his dynasty and allowed the Canossans to consolidate their control of the region. However, a new duke of Tuscany, Ranier, appears alongside the count of Arezzo in a ducal charter resolving a dispute in favour of the canons of Arezzo in October 1016.<sup>143</sup> Ranier was probably installed during Henry's expedition into Italy and although there is no indication of open conflict between Ranier and Boniface until 1026,<sup>144</sup> this fits the pattern of imperial appointments of figures with no link to the Canossans in positions of considerable power on the edge of Canossan territory.

Boniface does not appear in any surviving royal or imperial charters from Henry's reign. As charters can and have been used as a meter for proximity to the ruler, Boniface's absence suggests that he was not in the king's close circle.<sup>145</sup> In contrast,

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246: 'nostri fidelissimi marchionis'.

<sup>142</sup> Lazzari, 'Aziende fortificate, castelli e pievi', 105–7.

<sup>143</sup> Antonio Falce, 'Documenti inediti dei duchi e marchesi di Tuscia (secoli VII–XII)', *Archivio Storico Italiano* 7, no. 7 (1927): 84–7.

<sup>144</sup> Bertolini, 'Bonifacio, marchese e duca di Toscana', 99; Golinelli, 'L'Italia', 511.

<sup>145</sup> Bresslau, *Jahrbücher des deutschen Reiches unter Kaiser Konrad II.*, 193–204; Geoffrey Koziol, *Begging Pardon and Favor: Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca: Cornell

Boniface's father Tedald appeared as a petitioner in two of Henry's charters<sup>146</sup> and Boniface made regular appearances in the charters of Henry's successor Conrad II.<sup>147</sup> Likewise, the heads of ecclesiastical institutions closely tied to Boniface, namely the bishops of Mantua, Modena, Reggio and Cremona and the abbots of San Benedetto Po and Nonantola did not appear in the royal charters of this expedition.<sup>148</sup> Nor did Boniface's family members: Siegfried (bishop of Parma), Tedald and Conrad (Boniface's brothers), Richilde (Boniface's wife), and Lanfranc and Manfred (Boniface's brothers-in-law) were all absent. This strongly suggests that Henry was not in close contact with any members of Boniface's power structure and instead was developing an independent relationship network to counter that of the Canossans and their allies.

In combination, the trends within these charters demonstrate a strong statement of royal authority in many crucial locations that were of concern to the Canossans. New individuals with close ties to the emperor were installed in key positions. The rights of those who had been at odds with the Canossans, particularly ecclesiastical institutions, were protected and often extended. The mere production of these documents demonstrated Henry's claim to the right to intervene throughout Canossan territory. At the same time, these charters did nothing to strengthen bonds between Canossa and the king. Indeed, Henry's lack of contact with Boniface and his allies can be suggested to have gone some way towards dismantling these connections.

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University Press, 1992), 47–54, 70–6; Barbara H. Rosenwein, 'Friends and Family, Politics and Privilege in the Kingship of Berengar I', in *Portraits of Medieval and Renaissance Living: Essays in Memory of David Herlihy*, eds. Samuel Kline Cohn and Steven A. Epstein (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 106; Barbara H. Rosenwein, 'The Family Politics of Berengar I, King of Italy (888–924)', *Speculum* 71 (1996): 251.

<sup>146</sup> Bresslau, ed., 'Die Urkunden Heinrichs II', nos. 41, 72.

<sup>147</sup> Bresslau, ed., *Die Urkunden Konrads II*, nos. 71, 185, 231, 246, 258, 259.

<sup>148</sup> Bertolini, 'Bonifacio, marchese e duca di Toscana', 110; Sergi, 'I poteri dei Canossa', 36–7; Rinaldi, 'Da Adalberto Atto a Bonifacio', 73–4.

The actions described above are very similar to those taken against Arduin of Ivrea during 1013 and 1014. As discussed above, rights were extended and reiterated for key individuals and institutions in and around Ivrea, the core of Arduin's power. The imperial charter to the monastery at Fruttuaria was produced for much the same reason as the charter to the *arimanni* of Mantua: both documents allowed the emperor to make a statement of his authority in the very centre of his rival's territory and to issue rights which demonstrated his authority over the entirety of this territory. There are also striking parallels with the moves made against the Canossans around 1055 when they came into open conflict with Henry III.<sup>149</sup> It is widely acknowledged that in this period Henry pursued a policy of enrichment of elements within the Canossan lands which could oppose the family.<sup>150</sup> Over the course of 1055 he issued charters to the clergy of Bologna,<sup>151</sup> the monastery of San Salvi near Florence,<sup>152</sup> the bishop of Modena,<sup>153</sup> the *populus* of Ferrara,<sup>154</sup> the cathedral chapter of Cremona,<sup>155</sup> a newly installed imperial bishop of Mantua,<sup>156</sup> the *cives* of Mantua<sup>157</sup> and the monastery of San Zeno in Verona.<sup>158</sup> These documents described a circuit of imperial intervention in Canossan interests in the same manner as those produced by Henry II in the years 1013 to 1015.

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<sup>149</sup> Morselli, *Le origini di un comune*, 54.

<sup>150</sup> Fasoli, 'Note sulla feudalità canossiana', 60; Castagnetti, *Società e politica*, 44; Renato Bordone, *La società cittadina del Regno d'Italia: formazione e sviluppo delle caratteristiche urbane nei secoli XI e XII* (Turin: Palazzo Carignano, 1987), 116–27; Andrea Castagnetti, 'Arimanni e signori dall'età postcarolingia alla prima età comunale', in *Strutture e trasformazioni della signoria rurale nei secoli X–XIII*, eds. Gerhard Dilcher and Cinzio Violante. *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico* 44 (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996), 188–93.

<sup>151</sup> Bresslau, ed., *Die Urkunden Heinrichs III*, no. 345.

<sup>152</sup> Bresslau, ed., *Die Urkunden Heinrichs III*, no. 347.

<sup>153</sup> Bresslau, ed., *Die Urkunden Heinrichs III*, no. 350.

<sup>154</sup> Bresslau, ed., *Die Urkunden Heinrichs III*, no. 351.

<sup>155</sup> Bresslau, ed., *Die Urkunden Heinrichs III*, no. 354.

<sup>156</sup> Bresslau, ed., *Die Urkunden Heinrichs III*, no. 355.

<sup>157</sup> Bresslau, ed., *Die Urkunden Heinrichs III*, no. 356.

<sup>158</sup> Bresslau, ed., *Die Urkunden Heinrichs III*, no. 357.

The 1013 to 1015 documents have been dismissed by Bertolini as merely reiterations of existing rights.<sup>159</sup> Clearly this is not the case in all instances. While some of these charters were almost identical to earlier imperial grants, many added new rights and some addressed groups which had never before been recipients of imperial largesse. Furthermore, even where Henry's charters were reproductions of older rights or where they may have been drafted by their recipients, these documents are all statements of imperial authority. They still indicate a relationship between the emperor and their beneficiaries, witnesses and petitioners, and suggest mutual support between these individuals. Boniface and his allies are as conspicuous by their absence as his opponents are by their presence. This wary stance towards Boniface is contrary to the traditional view of the relationship between the Canossan family and Henry II, but the charter evidence for these years argues strongly that the alliance between the two was not as firm as is normally suggested.

## **Conclusion**

The modern view of Boniface of Canossa has been influenced heavily by his depiction in Donizone's *Vita Mathildis*. This author sought to present a unique and constant close relationship between the Canossans and the emperor, in part to further the glory of the family and in part to provide Matilda, Boniface's heir and Donizone's patron, with a form of legitimacy. As a result, Donizone's accounts of Boniface's relationship with the emperors must be viewed with caution and there is good reason to interpret Donizone's account in a different manner from that presented by much of the historiography. Donizone overstated the relationship between the emperors and Boniface as a means to

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<sup>159</sup> Bertolini, 'Bonifacio, marchese e duca di Toscana', 99.

establish Boniface, and hence Matilda, as the legitimate ruler of his territories. The reality was somewhat different: there is no evidence that Boniface was particularly close to Henry II and numerous documents suggest that Henry took active steps to curb the power of Boniface and his family. Boniface's actions and his position within the political structures of his time have been distorted by the rhetorical and political needs of an author writing half a century after his death.

This is not to say that Boniface was constantly at odds with the German emperors, but nor should it automatically be assumed that Boniface was a supporter of these emperors throughout his life. Instead, a more nuanced view of this relationship can be constructed. A charter produced in 1016 by Henry granting lands confiscated from Berengar and Hugo, sons of count Siegfried, to Richilde, Boniface's wife, suggests that the rift between the Canossans and the emperor was not insurmountable.<sup>160</sup> However, Boniface's absence from this charter is notable and is perhaps indicative of lingering tensions. Boniface's relationship with Conrad II seems to have been more favourable. Conrad installed Boniface as duke of Tuscany and, in a charter produced in Verona on 10 July 1037, referred to Boniface as 'our most faithful margrave'.<sup>161</sup> Arnulf of Milan, while reporting Conrad's expedition into Burgundy in 1034, referred to Aribert, the archbishop of Milan, and Boniface as the 'two lights of the kingdom'.<sup>162</sup> However, even during this period questions can be raised about the connection between the emperor and Canossa. As Anton has noted, the timing and motivation for Boniface's installation as duke of Tuscany is still debated,<sup>163</sup> and Arnulf was an author with specific political goals (it

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<sup>160</sup> Bresslau, ed., 'Die Urkunden Heinrichs II', no. 349.

<sup>161</sup> Bresslau, ed., *Die Urkunden Konrads II*, no. 246: 'nostri fidelissimi marchionis'.

<sup>162</sup> Arnulf, *Liber gestorum recentium*, Book 2:8: 'duo lumina regni'.

<sup>163</sup> Anton, 'Bonifaz von Canossa', 535.

should also be noted that Arnulf's other 'light of the kingdom' was in open conflict with Conrad by 1037). Boniface's relationship with Henry III has been explored more thoroughly, but could nevertheless benefit from this approach. It may be the case that a more amicable relationship between Boniface and Henry can be identified within the charter record prior to the collapse of this relationship towards the end of Boniface's life. All of these instances will need to be considered individually and in depth.

This revised and more nuanced account of Boniface's political position and relationship with the emperors has several consequences for our perception of Italy in the eleventh century. Firstly, this reconsideration of Donizone's work has implications for our understanding of the whole of Boniface's family. In particular, his account of Matilda of Canossa needs to be considered with greater scepticism. Matilda is undisputedly a figure of great importance in the conflict between the popes and emperors at the end of the eleventh century, but even the most learned accounts of her life are based in large part on Donizone's account. As a result Matilda's role, like that of Boniface, has been exaggerated and glorified in places in order to fulfil the author's rhetorical goals. This reconsideration of the agenda of Donizone's work also modifies our understanding of the Investiture Contest and the early communal history of several Italian cities such as Mantua, Parma and Ferrara. Donizone remains the main source for several pivotal events in these histories and his aims in writing must be considered more thoroughly.

The reconsideration of Boniface's position within Italy and his connection to the imperial court also highlights a tendency to oversimplify political relationships and alignments throughout this period. This trend is particularly evident in discussions of the Investiture Contest, where it is not uncommon to find individuals and families described

simply as supporters of the emperor or as supporters of the pope. In reality these figures, like Boniface, maintained much more complex relationships and loyalties. Just as the depiction of Boniface as a close imperial ally before becoming a major opponent of the emperor is inadequate, so too are depictions of bishops and magnates in this simple political binary of friend and enemy. This more complex view of structures of power within eleventh century Italy is of vital importance to the understanding of the period.

**Robert Houghton** is a Lecturer in Early Medieval European History at the University of Winchester. He is a social and political historian specialising in relationship networks and urban history in Italy, *c.*900–*c.*1150. He is currently working on the political activity of the bishops of Parma.